

February 15th, 2022

Dear Kasson Township Planning Commission,

We are writing to express our strong concerns regarding the proposed special land permit application by Two Peas, LLC for the parcel at 3800 W. Empire Highway (Tax # 45-007-019-008-00).

For context: The parcel in question abuts our property. And it is our understanding that it was once part of our parcel...it was the large working barn built for and by the original owners of our residence. And some of our buildings are mere feet from the “red barn” structure on that parcel.

Our concerns are as follows:

- The development of more commercial self-storage space along the empire highway corridor will continue to detract from the otherwise scenic pastoral “gateway” thoroughfare that links Traverse City to Empire and the Sleeping Bear Dunes.
 - Admittedly there are already two commercial properties on the adjoining parcels to the east. However, both of those parcels have a significant stand of mature fir trees on their south borders (bordering the highway)* that shields their view from the road. There is NO such stand of trees on the parcel in question.

**trees along empire highway that shield the view of the commercial properties:*



**NO trees along the parcel in question:*



- Relating further to the existing commercial structures on the parcels to the east of the parcel under discussion:
 - These existing commercial properties are located a significant distance from the existing residential properties to the north of them. This would not be the case with the property in question and our property.
 - Additionally, it is believed (though I can't verify it) that the Marina (two parcels to the east) was required to plant trees on the north part of their parcel so as to shield the residences in the distance from having to directly view the commercial properties*. And while there are currently some trees on the property line between our parcels the developer has already verbally stated to us his desire to cut them down. Which would further destroy the pastoral setting.

**Satellite image of distance between marina and residence on Gilbert Farm Lane, and trees believed to have been planted by Marina to shield view:*



- Our primary residence also operates as the Sleeping Bear Bed & Breakfast. We have grave concerns that commercial buildings built adjoining our property line would decimate our business. We have worked very hard to promote the Kasson, Empire, and Leelanau area to our guests. Commercial structures of this type (that could see traffic at all hours day and night) would disrupt and irreparably harm the tranquility we try to offer our guests.
 - The developer in question has shown no regard for our concerns nor business as he has already deposited a large amount of construction material* within feet of our property line and within full view of our backyard garden space that guests use to enjoy the outdoors. No communication or notification was given to us at all before this large pile of construction material was deposited next to our property. And he has not returned my calls. Taken together, this disregard and absence of communication, serves as a red flag that he will not be a “good neighbor”. And it is therefore highly unlikely he will take into consideration any concerns of those around him now or in the future.

** This construction material (seen below) appears to be for the building of the proposed self-storage units. Which raises the question whether he has already received approval from the commission? Or whether he believes the planning commission will automatically approve whatever he asks for? I do not believe it is the former, and sincerely hope it is not the latter.*



The red line is the approximate location of our property line.

We urge you to deny the proposed rezoning. However, if a compromise were to be considered I would urge the commission to consider splitting the parcel in such a manner that the storage units to be built would be on the eastern half of the parcel which would thereby provide a buffer from our residence (as well as planting of trees to the north, west, and south to further shield the industrial buildings from the view of the residences and the highway).

Thank you for your continued service and support of our community.

Best regards,

Deane Western

Deane and Elizabeth Western
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